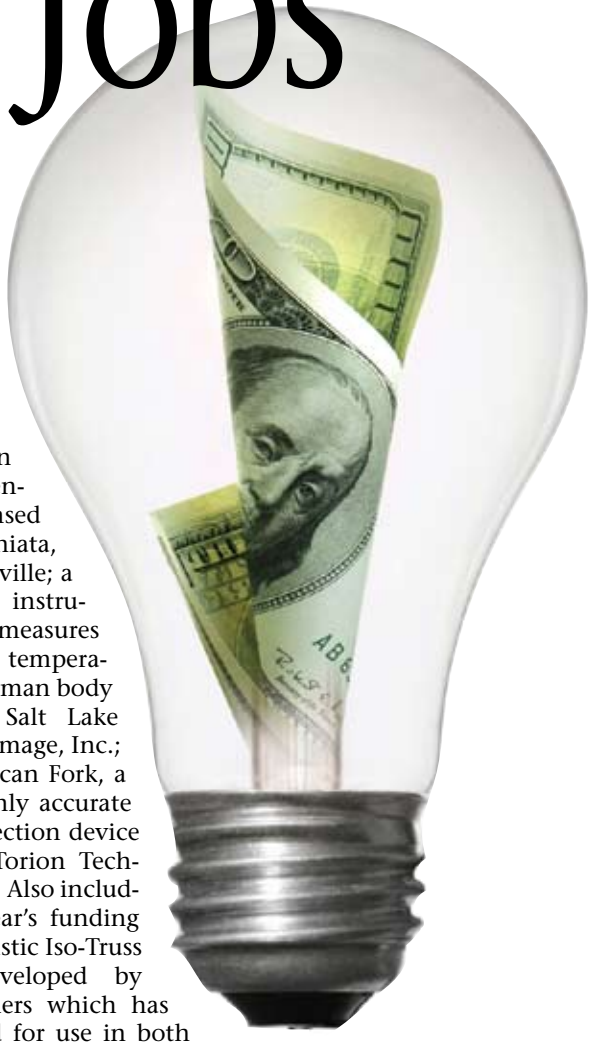
Our Job is Jobs

How the Utah Centers of Excellence is creating jobs by funding the licensing of university innovations.



For 20 years, Utah's Centers of Excellence Program has driven job creation through the commercialization of innovations that are produced from educational research. Recently, however, the program has undergone an efficiency shift to ensure that as many university developed technologies as possible are licensed and commercialized. Rather than simply fund the research, Centers of Excellence is now funding the company that will be licensing the product, drawing the innovations into the market rather than trying to push them out of the research labs once development is completed. The result is an accelerated process on the road from research to revenue.

Speed aside, these funds are also designed to reduce the risk assumed by the licensee when working with university developments, providing fuel for the fire at a very opportune time. Rather than take a financial leap of faith on a university innovation, Centers of Excellence funding allows firms to license a product while mitigating the market and technical risks inherent in these innovative technologies. Companies of all sizes are eligible to apply, making Centers of Excellence a unique opportunity for smaller organizations. This year, 39 proposals were received with overall funding requests exceeding $4.5 million. Final recommendations for funding included 21 licensees and one university center.

The 21 companies from this year's group are licensing a variety of innovations in numerous fields and markets. Some highlights include a DVD that preserves the data stored on it for more than 100 years, perhaps even up to a millennium, licensed by Millenniata, Inc. of Springville; a non-invasive instrument that measures deep tissue temperature in the human body licensed by Salt Lake Based Thermimage, Inc.; and in American Fork, a portable, highly accurate chemical detection device licensed by Torion Technologies, Inc. Also included in this year's funding was the futuristic Iso-Truss structure developed by BYU researchers which has been licensed for use in both bike frames and industrial and aerospace applications by Delta 7 Sports and their parent company.

One product with a slightly less high-tech feel is quite literally turning heads. Larada Sciences Inc., a University of Utah spinout, is licensing the Lousebuster; a unique, non-chemical treatment of head lice. Instead

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of multiple treatments with chemically formulated shampoos, the Lousebuster resembles a vacuum hose with a comb attached to the end. Instead of sucking air, however, it blows a specially calibrated high volume flow of warm, dry air through the hair, killing the lice that require cooler, humid conditions to survive.

These technologies have a strategic value for Utah and our economy. Not only do they solve many problems in our world and day-to-day life, but they drive economic development, and ultimately, job creation. In fact, the headline of this year's Centers of Excellence program report is, "Our Job is Jobs." With new legislative changes helping more and more university-developed technologies to successfully enter the marketplace, these trends in economic development and job creation will be the natural, positive result.

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- An instrument that measures deep tissue temperature
- A portable, highly accurate chemical detection device
- Lousebuster, a unique non-chemical treatment of head lice